

February Newsletter

Table of Contents

- **Trainer's Corner**
- **Random Act of Kindness**
- **E-File Pilot Project**
- **Using EMDS**
- **ICAB Recruitment**



Trainer's Corner

For FCRB Members & CASA Advocates: Diversity



www.Advocatelab.org shared the following:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2013, there were over 300 million people living in the United States. Of those, about a quarter were minor children, half were females, about 40% identified with an ethnic group other than Caucasian, the vast majority did not have at least a Bachelor's degree, and about 20% spoke a

language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Since 1970, the number of foreign born persons has steadily increased (Foreign born, n.d.). Likewise in CT, since SY2005/06, the number of English language learners has increased, as well as, the number of students who speak another language at home (CSDE, n.d.). For the first time in U.S. history, America has had an African-American president, a Hispanic Supreme Court justice, and legalized gay marriage across the country. It is safe to say, we are moving towards heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. America has been referred to as a salad bowl, and this cannot be truer than in the 21st century.

This truism requires that workers engage in culturally competent practices. "Culturally competent care has been defined as a system that acknowledges the importance and incorporation of culture, assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences, expansion of cultural knowledge, and adaptation of interventions to meet culturally unique needs" (Mirsky, 2013).

Cultural competency involves:

- An increased awareness of one's own experience
- Clarification of one's own value system
- Acceptance of differences
- Knowledge of client's own culture

(Mirsky, 2013; Zayas et al, 1997)



Courageous Conversations

In order to determine a youth's culture, which is more than just race and ethnicity, one must engage in a respectful conversation with that individual. Courageous conversation is a term used for conversations that involve taboo or uncomfortable topics for either party with the goal of building a more effective relationship. These conversations are driven by four

agreements; stay engaged, speak your truth, experience discomfort, expect and accept non-closure (Courageous, 2012).



Consider this...

Depending on one's perspective, the same situation may look different to different people. It is important to remember that there is never one story, but multiple stories derived from various vantage points.

Look at the image below...what do you see?



From one perspective, you may see a “3”, or an “M”, or a “W”, or maybe an “E”. There is always more than one way to look at a situation. There is never a single story.



Watch Video: To learn more click [Danger of a Single Story](#)

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to watch her 19 minute TEDtalk.

For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training Credit

For application of understanding the culture of teens, please consider attending an upcoming **Fostering Futures: Advocating for Transitioning Age Youth** in Sioux City on February 9th or West Des Moines February 25. Contact your Local Coordinator to register today.

If you would like to learn more about the impact of culture on the child welfare system and services consider “liking” **CASA of Iowa** Facebook page and like the post on Racial Disproportionality and Disparity in Child Welfare.

To receive credit following completion, contact the ICAB State Training Specialist at lesa.christianson@dia.iowa.gov and share how you plan on utilizing the information shared in the Facebook link within your advocacy role.



For new or seasoned CASA Advocates, National CASA standards for State and Local Programs require advocates to receive training 12 in-service hours annually. Addressing diversity and building upon cultural competencies is included in that annual requirement. For a complete list of available trainings contact your Local Coordinator.

Random Act of Kindness

\$9 Parking Ticket = Unintentional Impact

ICAB Volunteerism = Intentional Impact

Have you ever witnessed a random act of kindness or noticed an act of caring, selflessness, or subtle outreach that made a difference in someone's day? Last week, someone took the time and a few dollars (\$9 to be exact) and placed them in a friend's parking ticket envelope on the windshield. And although it had small monetary value, that random act of kindness has become part of a repeated story every time someone else talks about plugging their meter or getting a parking ticket. It represents good, and a desire to help others, and it has made an unintentional positive impact on this friend and on those who hear her story. It suggests that even the smallest of effort made on behalf of another may well turn something unpleasant into something memorable and it bears witness to a true random act of kindness.

Random Act of Kindness week is February 10 – 16, 2017. As CASA and FCRB volunteers you regularly reach out and touch other's lives. You offer yourself up and give of your time and resources. You step into a difficult situation that does not belong to you and you take part ownership in it to become part of the solution. Your work and your acts of kindness are anything but random. Your roles make an intentional impact ~ an impact that is always life changing for children and families, an impact that moves a Judge to make the best decisions possible, and possibly an impact that influences a worker to see another side of things.

Maybe you have \$9 to pay someone's parking ticket or maybe you have 9 hours a month to make a difference in the life of a child. Either way, we are grateful for your kindness to all and for representing ICAB well.



Moving Ahead with E-file Pilot Project

Over the years, a significant amount of time and resources have been spent preparing hard copy case file packets for the local boards. Additional costs associated with this practice include the supplies, file cabinets/storage space, postage/ shipping and shredding of the confidential materials. We have anywhere from 145-203 volunteers serving on 29 local boards throughout the state. This requires a large amount of confidential information that is shared and stored in multiple places at any given time. The Child Advocacy Board recognizes the importance of confidentiality and is working to enhance the security and handling of case file documents for the FCRB program.



After months of planning, the FCRB program is ready to move ahead with the pilot project for sharing case file materials with facilitators and local board members in electronic format. Since the State of Iowa transitioned to Google in December 2016, it provides the opportunity for us to use Google Drive as a secure method for sharing case file information.

Special thanks to the following board members who have been instrumental in the planning phase for the pilot project: *Ruth Ann Loebach, Barb Featherston, Jolene Schumacher, Kelsey Baker, Becky Miller, Don Ross, Toby Mitchell and Don Logan*. These individuals have gathered input from their fellow board members throughout this process and have raised concerns and suggestions regarding the issues associated with receiving FCRB case file documents electronically.

The following boards will be part of the pilot project beginning with their next board meeting in either March or April.

1. Algona Cluster
2. Benton-Iowa-Tama
3. Buena Vista
4. Cherokee-Ida
5. Dubuque 2
6. Johnson
7. Linn-Jones 3
8. Wapello Cluster

Training will be provided to the local board members in February or March prior to their next scheduled meeting. Ongoing support will be provided by staff to make this transition as smooth as possible. Local board members will continue to receive hard copies of the current case permanency plan and social history; however all remaining case file materials will be accessed electronically. Any board member on the identified pilot boards who do not



have access to internet or a computer/laptop needs to talk to his/her local coordinator. We will work with everyone and offer possible solutions to this new process that do not prohibit the member's continued ability to serve on the board.

Updates regarding the pilot project will continue to be provided in future newsletters. Stay tuned!

CASA Advocates and Coaches - Using EMDS to Review Documents

You've set up your EDMS account. You've logged in and can view your CASA case(s) under the 'My Cases' button. Your next question might be "Hmmm, now what?" Here is a quick tutorial about viewing your case documents.

IOWA JUDICIAL BRANCH
Administering justice under the law equally to all persons.
ELECTRONIC FILING

Home eFile Cases My Profile Log Out user: Test Filer1

Home » My Cases

My Cases Number of cases displayed per page: 50

Case Number County Participant's Last Name History Service List

Black Hawk

Ex: SCSC126139

Search My Cases

☒ Show Active ☐ Show Inactive ☐ Show Both Delete

Case Title	Case Number	Case Type	Judge	County	Certificate	Inactive	
TEST FILER 1 VS. TINKER BELL	SCSC126255	SMALL CLAIM - MONEY JUDGMENT		Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HULK VS. CAPTAIN AMERICA	SCSC126244	SMALL CLAIM - MONEY JUDGMENT		Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CATWOMAN VS. SUPER GIRL	SCSC126240	SMALL CLAIM - MONEY JUDGMENT		Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUPERMAN VS. BATMAN	SCSC126236	SMALL CLAIM - MONEY JUDGMENT		Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMALL CLAIMS TEST 1	SCSC126228	AUTO ACCIDENT		Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUGS BUNNY VS ELMER FUDD	SCSC000001	AUTO ACCIDENT		Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRAINING TEST CASE 1	LACV105313	CIVIL LAW - CONTRACT - DEBT COLLECTION		Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESTATE OF JOHN DOE	ESPR056789	Estate	ROBERT E MAHAN - Division BL0006991	Black Hawk	Service List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In the graphic above, the numbers in the red box indicate the cases to which you've been assigned. To view a case, click on the **blue** case number which will begin with the letters JVJV. The Service List **blue** link will take you to a screen that lists everyone who is a party to this case in the EDMS system. Hint: Anything that is available to click and open will be in **blue** on your screen.

Once you click on the JVJV#, you will be taken to the case screen. The graphic below is from a current case; the information has been changed to protect case confidentiality.

Case Number:	JVJV00000	Case Title:	Johnny Doe
Opened: 06-06-2016			
County: Swift			
Case Type: Child in Need of Assistance Status: Active Judge: BILL M SMITH			
Next Scheduled Date & Time: 2017-04-12 10:30:00 Event: CINA REVIEW			
Prayer Amount: \$.00			
Show/Hide Participants			
File Date	Case History		
01-11-2017 08:24:00 AM Court	OTHER REPORT Filed by: Court		
11-22-2016 11:41:00 AM Court	OTHER REPORT Filed by: Court		
10-20-2016 10:50:00 AM Court	ORDER FOR DISPOSITION REVIEW/PERM HRG 4/12/17 10:30AM Filed by: Court		
10-20-2016 10:30:00 AM Court	COURT REPORTER MEMORANDUM AND CERTIFICATE JESSICA SAVITS FOR JUDGE Filed by: Court		
10-19-2016 09:07:00 AM Plaintiff	CASA REPORT BY JEAN Filed by: CASA-COURT APPOINT SPECIAL ADVOCATE		
10-17-2016 03:08:00 PM Plaintiff	JUVENILE PROGRESS REPORT: JV - PROGRESS REPORT BY MOLLI Filed by: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES		
10-17-2016 03:08:00 PM Plaintiff	JUVENILE PROGRESS REPORT: JV - PROGRESS REPORT FAMILY TEAM MEETING NOTES - MOTHER Filed by: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES		
10-17-2016 03:08:00 PM Plaintiff	JUVENILE PROGRESS REPORT: JV - PROGRESS REPORT FAMILY TEAM MEETING NOTES - FATHER		

This screen shows all the documents that have been filed to date on this case, newest to oldest. The top of the screen includes the child's name, case number, judge's name, next court date and the type of hearing that is scheduled. The left column shows the date and time the document was filed. Again, you will click on the blue links to open the document. As noted on this screen shot, there may be documents listed that you are not authorized to open and those will be in black. Many of these documents are procedural in nature, intended for the Judge and Clerk.

There is really no need to download case documents to your personal computer or even print them. The documents are available to you at any time in the EDMS system. By limiting downloads and printing of documents, our program goes one step further in maintaining the confidentiality of the children and families to whom we are assigned. If there is a document that you are unable to click to open such as an exhibit or a DHS Child Protective report, please contact your CASA Coordinator for assistance in obtaining that document.

As always, if you have questions about EDMS or your account, please don't hesitate to contact your coordinator. Good luck and enjoy using EMDS!

ICAB RECRUITMENT

February 2017

DIVERSITY ///matters

CASA is central to fulfilling society's most fundamental obligation by making sure a qualified, compassionate adult will fight for and protect a child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect and to learn and grow in the safe embrace of a loving family.

In August, 2011, National CASA's former CEO, Michael Piraino, expressed a call to action and rolled out of the I Am For The Child campaign. Every time I think about our mission as an agency, the needs of the children we serve and our commitment to ensuring the best possible advocacy for them, I am reminded of Michael's passionate and provoking statement that we are dealing with human rights issue. I believe that's exactly what you, our Foster Care Review Board Reviewers and our CASA Advocates, are tackling when you stand up for children – a human rights issue.

In this month when we recognize and honor Black History, I am reminded of our need for and commitment to a diverse, well-trained, culturally competent base of volunteers in both our Foster Care Review Board and CASA Programs. I can't say it any better than Michael, so please take a few minutes to read part of his 2011 call to action on the next page:

An honest discussion about Diversity, Inclusion and Equity



“Our society has struggled mightily with issues of race and culture and sexual orientation since well before we declared “...certain inalienable rights” for all. Though we’ve come a long way, we still have a long way to go. A very long way. Our mission demands that we be at the very cutting edge of this issue, because there are far too many children of color in the foster care and family court systems. For example, African American children make up only 15% of the general population of children in America, but represent nearly 30% of the foster care population. This is what is referred to as “disproportionality,” and it is not unique to large urban areas. Across the state of Minnesota in 2002, for example, children of color were 16 times more likely to be in the foster care system. The system strives to treat all children equally, but the reality is that not all children in foster care stand on equal ground. African American, Native American children, and in many communities, Latino children are disproportionately represented, and they also suffer disparately poor outcomes. It is of such concern that in 2006, the Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity called these disparities in outcomes a “chronic crisis.”

Statistics show that African American children are:

- More frequently reported to Child Protection Services
- Less likely to receive in-home prevention services
- More likely to be removed from their home
- Likely to stay longer in foster care
- Less likely to be reunified
- Less likely to be adopted
- Less likely to be placed with relatives
- More likely to age out without a family

This is a human and civil rights issue, and as advocates of vulnerable children, the CASA movement has a vested interest in making sure that all children, regardless of race, culture, ability, class, or sexual orientation, are able to grow and thrive in a healthy and supportive environment. As a diverse CASA/GAL network, we are able to better understand and promote the well-being of the children we serve. Embracing diversity makes us better advocates by . . . providing fresh ideas and perspectives for problem solving in our multicultural world, enabling us to respond to each child's unique needs.

Best practices in diversity require time, dedicated resources, commitment at every level and relationship building. An organization does not come to exemplify best practices over a short span of time; instead, success is achieved over the long haul. We know a well-trained CASA/GAL volunteer is able to elevate the issue of disproportionality and disparity in outcomes for underserved populations. By doing so, all stakeholders in court are challenged to view child welfare as a civil rights issue for the poor and vulnerable in their communities.”



Now . . . I'm asking for your help. Help in recruiting volunteers from under-utilized groups so we can continue to have a strong, diverse base of volunteers to serve Iowa's most vulnerable children. We value the unique skills and perspectives that volunteers from different cultures, backgrounds, and careers bring to the Iowa Child Advocacy Board.

How you can help us in our Diversity Outreach

Let us know if you have suggestions for groups we can connect with or new ideas on how to spread the message about the need for more volunteers from diverse backgrounds. We would love to see more male volunteers, more African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American volunteers, differently abled volunteers and bilingual volunteers.

If you experience an opportunity to talk about the FCRB or CASA program with someone who fits our need:

- * Focus on the individual, rather than on the broad issues of the child welfare system
- * Discuss how their unique personal traits can result in positive outcomes for the child
- * Help them look at how their own skills and perspectives are valued
- * Ask them to think about how others have positively impacted them
- * Share with them the opportunity to have that same positive impact in the life of a child
- * And if you're just not sure you can do that, but know someone who would a great volunteer, just let me know!

Special Request: If you or someone you know would be interested in serving as part of a short-term focus group (3-4 meetings) to help with a diversity outreach plan, please contact me, Jennifer Slife, at 319-310-5505 or at jennifer.slife@dia.iowa.gov

Hint, hint



Thanks for all you do!